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BUILDING

For the Children in the South.

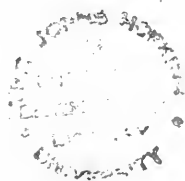
BY

A. D. MAYO.

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BUILDING FOR THE CHILDREN IN THE SOUTH.

BY A. D. MAYO.

I propose, under the title, "Building for the Children in the South," to give the results of a four years' careful observation, through the States beyond the Potomac and the Ohio, concerning the most practical and effective way of establishing

THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

By the American system of education, I mean not one kind of schools, exclusively, but all good schooling that has been found valuable in our country. The American system of education means, first and foremost, the free common school for all children, supported by public taxation, administered by experts who are chosen by the people, in public education, as in Government, the final court of appeal in this Republic; the free secondary, normal, technical, and higher education, held as a matter of undoubted public right, to be exercised in every State according to a high educational expediency, of which the people are the final judge; both elementary and superior public schools being kept as near the people in their local capacity as is consistent with efficient administration; even State supervision being confined to things that are general and essential, and national aid invited only at the most critical points, with the sole purpose to stimulate local effort, with no assumption of national supervision or control.

Of course, public education, thus defined, has its general function in the elementary training of mind, discipline of character, and imparting of common information, which every wise man knows is essential to the humblest citizen and the loftiest statesman alike.

Of the six millions of American children and youth actually in daily attendance, and the ten millions loosely enrolled in public, and the three hundred thousand in private schools, nine-tenths will certainly turn their backs upon the school house door as early as the age of fourteen. The first and ever-present concern in the American system is to do the best thing possible for these millions of children, whose average school-life, to-day, in the East does not exceed six, in the West five, or in the South three full school-years. In the secondary, higher, industrial, and normal departments, which deal with the few hundred thousand youth in training for educational and social leadership, the common school has its right, which the people have

unmistakably confirmed in every American State. But, in this upper region of education, the people invite the coöperation of every effective school. There is ample field for the display of individual genius, of corporate enterprise, of home and neighborhood training. And here the church, of every communion, has a field of operation so broad and exacting that it may well limit its efforts to what it can never half include, and provoke no conflict with the people on that field where the people are bound to have their way, whoever goes to the wall; the maintenance, at public expense, of the free elementary school, open to every child, unsectarian in religion though profoundly moral and religious in the grain, unpartisan in politics, knowing no distinction of race or sex or social condition,—the people's university of American citizenship for every American child.

More and more is it coming to be understood by all competent and patriotic thinkers, that there is no necessary conflict of interests between these different methods of achieving the great result; since the most exclusive private or parochial school in our country must finally adjust itself to the conditions of our peculiar American life. And it will be a national calamity if, in the face of the invading host of illiteracy now marching in solid rank to capture the public life of every American city and State, the champions of the various departments of school-life permit themselves to be drawn into a side quarrel that shall for a moment divert the attention of the people from the one American question that towers immeasurably above all present issues of church and state, *What shall we do with that American barbarism which, disguised under any deceptive title, is the same hateful thing, in New Orleans or in Boston; in the wilds of the mountains, or the slums of the metropolis; in the blanket of the cow-boy, or under the dress-coat of the senator; the implacable foe of everything which every true American holds essential to the existence of the foremost republic in the world?*

I propose to tell how, under the present conditions, the whole people of the South, within the present generation, can fairly and firmly place on the ground this American system of education. For I hold that if the people of these sixteen States, with all the help that Providence may vouchsafe, in a long generation, can establish their final system of education, which shall be developed as the years go on, it will have done the greatest work for the children ever yet accomplished in Christendom. And in this "Building for the Children" I do not appear as an outside architect, flourishing an ideal plan or insisting upon any local excellence of home or foreign celebrity. Indeed, *I shall speak of nothing which has not been actually*

tried, with complete success, under average conditions, in some part of the Southland. So my discourse will only be an honest effort to voice the achievements of Southern school-men comparing notes and cheering each other around the corner of the mighty structure now rising under their hands. I only presume to wield the *baton* of the orchestra while it plays an overture which is but a series of variations on this one theme, every strain and note caught and fixed in the score as it has floated in from the solitary music breathed into the ear of some little child.

THE AWAKENING OF THE PEOPLE.

The first condition of success in our Southern States is a great and general awakening of all classes of the Southern people to the appalling dangers of the illiteracy revealed, though half concealed, by the startling figures of the national census of 1880. For, until the whole people of the South honestly face this condition, there can be no general or very effective development of educational reform. The superior class of the Southern people, during the past fifteen years, under circumstances that would have appalled any but an American people, have put in operation, in every State, a sufficient system of public schools, and have reconstructed and enlarged their old system of the secondary and higher education. And I say, here, if need be, in the face of disparagement from over the line, that no body of superior people, so few in numbers, so overwhelmed in the work of rebuilding society from the wrecks of civil war, has anywhere made an effort so heroic, with such a hopeful outlook, as this people of whom I speak. This year the sixteen States once known as Southern will spend not less than fifteen millions of dollars upon the education of their children, and in every State there will be a positive gain in every department of educational life.

But everybody knows that this is only the beginning, and is, at best, so painfully inadequate to compass the result that it were well to waste no time in congratulations, but press onward to the more difficult work of *a great awakening of the whole people of the South.* For here is the cause of the imperfect working, sometimes the discouraging failure, of the best plans of "Building for the Children." In every community there are men of wealth and influence not yet really awakened to this mighty necessity of the people. There are too many reasonably prosperous and respectable parents only concerned for their own children, not even intelligently informed of their demands. And there is the mighty army of those to whom education is yet only a vague name,—at best a name to charm with,—who

either care nothing for the school, or abuse it by ignorant interference with everything wisely done therein. Now, in Europe, the method of dealing with such a situation would be for a centralized government to mature a plan, enact a law, place the expert in the school-room and the policeman at the father's elbow, and enforce such elementary instruction as it should deem expedient for a State governed by itself. But I need not say this is not the American, especially is not the Southern American way in which any good thing can be done. Nowhere in our country has a group of eminent people so great influence for good as still in the South; but, after all, its power is only moral and its implement is only agitation. If anybody in those States is deluding himself with the fancy that an effective system of schools for the masses can, in any way, be forced upon, smuggled into, or insinuated among the people without their full consent and hearty coöperation, his disenchantment is only a question of time. Anybody can lead the horse to water, but all the world can't force the horse to drink unless he is dry. Only when this great mass of ignorance and indifference at the bottom of every State is agitated, upheaved, and moved to its deepest depths, can anything effective be accomplished in such a mighty work as I outline. Until this is done our Southern school-life, from the plantation primary to the University of Virginia, will be a vessel tossed on the stormy waves of a treacherous sea. As this is accomplished, all schools will improve, superior teachers will come into demand, and, in a thousand ways now deemed impossible, money will flow in to help the building rise towards heaven.

This great awakening cannot be achieved, to any large extent, by laborers from without, but is the proper work of the whole superior class at home. Every State has its own favorite way of raising a popular breeze. Every popular device not absolutely unsuited to the case should be brought into requisition for the next ten years to arouse the people. The leading press of every Southern State is now doing splendid service, and only needs to be told to keep on doing the same thing, a little harder, every week. Every county, village, secular and religious newspaper should be "roped in" and made to blaze with the best columns that the ablest friend of the children can indite. The pulpit should be summoned to speak out in unmistakable tones for that general enlightenment, without which every church becomes a dark cave of superstition where contentious Christians squabble over dry bones of non-essentials, knowing not the light of that love which is the "fulfilling of the law." Every candidate for public office, from President down to policeman, should

be compelled to face the people and tell "what he knows about" education. It will be "mighty" convenient, twenty years hence, for the young lawyers and ambitious young men of the South to be able to pull out of their pockets a "ringing speech" in behalf of the boys and girls who will then pass in the ballots that decide their political fate. And if great statesmen pose and ponder in uncertainty, and mighty doctors have no opinions, and the stars of fashion "have no use" for themes so common place as education in their drawing-rooms, then let every earnest man and woman, every eager school-boy and girl come to the front to plead, "in season and out of season," for the children. And if all other devices fail, perhaps the Lord of Light will inspire even gouty, grizzly, ragged old Uncle Remus to climb the nearest rail-fence and give his last shout, "*God bress de little children in de schools.*"

I know of what I speak when I say that the inward ear of the South is now awaiting this mighty call, all ready to respond. Why, even I, a stranger from the far-off land of snowdrifts and east wind, a man of whom nobody had heard, with only a hundred dollars in my pocket, and nothing in my carpet-bag but the New Education, have been welcomed through the length and breadth of the great Southern Empire in a way almost unheard of in the annals of American educational life. I have found no crowd of colored folk so humble that they did not hearken like quiet children while I have talked of the blessings of education. The most frisky colony of small boys on the front seat of the opera-house becomes my most receptive audience as soon as they find out I am talking for them. The wisest of Southern men come to find out if I have any key to unlock any educational gate now closed. The best people in a hundred villages tramp through winter mud and storm to encourage my familiar talk. The only drawback to my ministry is the fact that I know so little of what I speak; am a man of sixty, who lost his constitution forty years ago, and is now living on the few remaining by-laws; cannot be in a hundred places at once, correspond with every teacher, and be the friend of every smart boy and darling little girl between the Potomac and the Rio Grande. I go to a town of ten thousand people, and find the largest assembly hall thrown open, at noonday, crowded with school-children and their teachers; the gallery a rainbow of pretty girls from the neighboring academy; the leading men of the city on the platform; all hungry and thirsty for the gospel according to the children. I am invited to an Educational Barbecue, where, after the mighty roast is consumed, the people gather in solid mass around the most convenient stump, and close my hour of talk

with a resolve to "go the whole hog" for education. I stand in a college chapel, twenty years ago a hospital and a fortress on the battle-ground in the rear of Vicksburg; the old portholes yet remaining in its dilapidated window-shutters; the house crowded with the young people of two great schools, the sons and daughters of the men we were fighting then, now cheering every patriotic word as lustily as a music-hall full of Boston boys and girls. Now if I, a stranger and nobody in particular, can do these things, what cannot the foremost men of the South, in this home of eloquence, — what cannot those women before whose social power we all doff our hats, — achieve, if once moved by the spirit of the Lord as workers in this great revival for the awakening of the people in the supreme cause of "Building for the Children"? Surely, to a people so magnetic, susceptible, enthusiastic, and irresistible as this, one need not argue or entreat to come forth once more in its might in behalf of those who are dearer than life. The country wants the South not otherwise than as God made it and the providential schooling of the past has left it, and only demands that its people shall give themselves, just as they are, in their own best way, to this glorious crusade for light and love. Let South Carolina go on "eating fire"; only follow her splendid schoolmaster, Governor Thomson, eating fire in behalf of education. Let the whole South become "solid" for the children, and it shall become the corner "stone that cannot be broken," on which shall rise the temple of liberty seen in vision by the fathers, still the dearest hope of all her worthy daughters and patriotic sons.

LOCAL TAXATION FOR EDUCATION.

The second condition of success in "Building for the Children" is, *to thoroughly arouse and inform the public mind on the radical importance of general local taxation for the support of schools.* The average man always finds it difficult to take up one good thing without dropping another. Our Southern States, for the next generation, need every agency for the support of schools, individual, corporate, local, and State, with all the aid that the National Government can be induced to give. But it is very important that the people should know *where the real pinch must finally come*, and who can justly be held responsible for the success or failure of their new education. A community that buttons up its own pocket and waits for private beneficence, State or National aid, to educate its children, will certainly be disappointed and remain in ignorance. So, whatever may be our individual opinion on the supplementary aids for the public school, all thoughtful men must agree in this, that *the burden must*

finally be shouldered by the community whose children are taught in the schools.

I know the uncertain ground on which I tread when I press home this point of local taxation. One of the most painful signs of ignorance and selfishness in public affairs is the prevalence of the notion that taxation, at best, is disguised despotism, and the community that gets off with the least is most to be congratulated. The most fruitful field for the demagogue is a community demoralized by this fallacy,—for he has only to raise the cry of “reduction of taxes” to carry a majority of deluded people, who, to save on the tax-bill, will put the knife to the throat of every sacred interest and willingly drift back to barbarism. *The poorest speculation in financial affairs is to knock out the brains of a community to save money.* The American idea is, that taxation is a voluntary assessment of the people, according to their ability, to pay for things indispensable to the existence and progress of the community. And wisdom in public finance consists in taxing most generously for the most radical public necessity. The State or community that taxes bravely and amply for public education will find itself more and more relieved from the thousand perils of public dishonesty, public corruption, and the hateful charge for crime and pauperism, and the manifold curses that, like a flock of buzzards, hover over an ignorant people.

Whatever may be our theory of public finance, it must be evident that *the one place where local taxation can be most forcibly urged is in behalf of the children.* All men give money freely for what they love best; and surely the school-tax should have in it most of the heart and mind of the people. There may be reasonable doubt concerning the outcome of expenditure for many objects of public concern. But no competent man, for a moment, will question the wisdom of the most generous investment in that education which is the development of power and the training of every kind of ability that will insure the highest prosperity of every sort in the years to come. For public money wisely expended in a good school is money loaned to the one creditor who always pays, who inherits what we must leave, to whose charge must be committed everything for which men toil, suffer, and fight in this world. The real treasury of every commonwealth, of any city or county therein, is the child. Every thing, at last, depends on our success in making him intelligent, industrious, refined, and good. The character of a town, a county, a generation hence, is the character we pay for by what we give to the upper story of the child, to-day. To leave him in mental and moral darkness, ignorant, superstitious, brutal, quarrelsome, and shut up to his

own little narrow life, is the surest way on earth to blight the community to which he belongs. So every dollar wisely expended on the child is "treasure laid up in heaven," and heaven always pays compound interest, while hell was repudiation and bankruptcy from the beginning. Whatever may be left undone by Nation or States, no community that understands its own interest will evade or resist the utmost possible sacrifice for that public education which pays everybody as no other outlay does in this world. And the men who should lead in this good work should be those whom God has blessed with abundant means. The only safety for prosperity is found where the mass of the people is competent to understand the relations of capital and labor. Communism is the pit that yawns below every State whose masses are groping through the perilous labyrinth of mental confusion and labor without brains. Of all classes in our country, the wealthy class can least afford to advocate a narrow and selfish policy in public education.

And, further, we must insist that justice and interest alike demand the most generous and persistent expenditure for education in the very lowest strata of society. There is little danger that the children of the well-to-do and superior class will not enjoy the best opportunities. But the one class no State can afford to neglect is that for which the majority cares little, and which, so often, has no wise regard for itself. To cast upon the ignorant mass of either race the responsibility of educating itself is simply to declare that a State can get on safely with such an element perpetually increasing at the bottom of society. It is like the foolish householder who should turn in disgust from the foul cess-pool under his chamber-window, waiting till it should purify itself, while he lavished his thousands on the adornment of the drawing room and the luxuries of his table. In due time a ghastly demon would arise from that neglected abyss and stalk through his palace, smiting the dearest household treasures with disease and death, and the glory of his mansion would be changed to a charnel-house.

And we must realize that the most valuable education we can give these ignorant masses, of every sort, is the most stringent training in that intelligent industry, rigid economy, and public spirit which will bring out their children upon the high ground of worthy citizenship. It will be good for the Southern colored man to know that he is not to remain the perpetual romance of Christendom; less and less, every year, will be bolstered up by charity from abroad, and more, as the years go on, will be forced to take his own place and make his way, in American style, toward the front. American citi-

zenship can not always mean prolonged childhood, or American suffrage the voting of ignorant masses on the most complex problem of government now set upon earth. The best friends of our colored people will now tell them that the highway to genuine "civil rights" is the open front door of solid American manhood. The intelligent, industrious, and reliable portion of the freedmen, to-day, see more money and are better able to face a just taxation than the people of New England for the first fifty years of colonial life. The same habit of conscientious economy, intelligent industry, and persistent expenditure on the upper story of society that brought out that people, amid the stern surroundings of those early years, would land our Southern freedmen and the lower masses of the white race, in half the time, in a position that would provoke the envy of the majority of mankind for education. *Taxation is even more the privilege of the poor than the duty of the rich.* For no wealth can long endure the strain of a shiftless, childish, dependent lower class, that swallows up every thing thrown into it as the all-devouring grave shuts out the light of life.

The States of this Union where education is most glorified, and where the people are best satisfied with its results, are those in which a large proportion of the school-funds are raised by local taxation. Massachusetts has no State school-tax, and distributes only a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, yearly, from State funds; while her local assessment, last year, reached the sum of five millions several hundred thousand dollars, raised by towns and cities, which assessed themselves from one to four and a half mills upon the dollar for schools alone. Every Northern State, with but two exceptions, raises the major part of its school-tax by home assessment; Pennsylvania and Iowa the whole; New York, Ohio, and Illinois, four dollars to one. Of the Southern States the majority endeavor to support schools chiefly by State funds or general taxes, and the schools in the Southern States are satisfactory just in proportion to the local consent to taxation. In my journeying through the South, I am the perpetual witness to the sharp contrast between two sorts of communities in the same State and even neighborhood. One town refuses to assess the local tax and struggles on with an inferior public school, good enough to destroy the private schools, too poor to satisfy anybody, and the whole educational problem is a muddle from which nobody can find the way out. Another town, no more favored in means, assesses a competent tax, establishes graded schools for both races, utilizes the best teachers in the place, and finds itself, in six months, in the most enthusiastic state of satisfaction about the children. I

have never seen little cities, of five thousand people, anywhere, in such a state of harmony and honest pride and happiness as scores of these towns, from Washington to San Antonio.

And nowhere does "bread cast upon the waters" bring so quick return in kind as in a town whose people, by a heroic effort, have united to support the elementary education for every child. The cities of Nashville and Atlanta, in ten years, have gained in reliable population and increase of valuation enough to pay, twice over, all their expenditure for schools. The best "boom" now in a good Southern county town is a first-rate system of public schools, crowned by a good academy for secondary instruction. I could give the names of a score of such places where the sudden increase of superior population from adjacent districts has raised the values of real estate in a way to make the school the best financial operation heard of in a generation.

So let all hands turn to, and through the press and public speech, and especially by private converse between man and man, everywhere, push the fruitful idea that "the gods help those that help themselves;" that taxation for the children is an investment in all that good men and women hold dearest in our dear land; and that the community that gets in ahead with the best system of education for all, is bound to grow and become, if not in quantity, in the higher element of quality, a leader in the life of the new South.

THE TEACHER.

But I am told that, with the uttermost that can be expected even under favorable circumstances, the amount of money that can be set apart for education in the average Southern community must be small, and the people may well-nigh be discouraged when they have done their best. All this I have seen, and am *not* discouraged myself. For the upshot of all I know about education is, that but *one* thing is absolutely necessary to a good school among a people alive for the children. That one absolute essential is a good teacher; and a good teacher every school may have if the people will begin to spend at the soul-end, and develop the material accessories therefrom. I am not indifferent to the great assistance that may be derived from a model school-room, improved school-books, and the various illustrative apparatus which adorns, sometimes even encumbers, the teacher's desk. But all this is a "body of death" till breathed upon by the spirit of the true instructor, and a real teacher can bring around himself, at least, a temporary body, until the people are able to give the fit clothing to his work.

General Garfield, returning to his *alma mater*, Williams College, Massachusetts, which for many years was known chiefly by the great teaching of President Hopkins, said, at commencement dinner, "I rejoice with you over the new surroundings of our old college; these beautiful buildings, large collections, ample endowments, and the improvements of this beautiful town. But permit me to say that, if I were forced to elect between all this without Dr. Hopkins, and Dr. Hopkins with only a shingle and a piece of chalk, under an apple-tree,—he on one end of an oak log and I on the other,—I would say, *My university shall be Dr. Hopkins, president and college in one.*"

May the South, in its new "Building for the Children," learn from the dismal American experience of the past, to *put its first money into the teacher*, and keep putting it in, until teachers and children persuade the people to give an outward temple fit for the dwelling-place of the new spirit of life that has been born in their midst.

I have in mind a picture of a noble school-house, in a prosperous Northern town, going to wreck, with broken windows, battered doors, the walls disfigured, the yards a litter, and the school itself a nursery of bad manners and clownish behavior. The trouble is, a knot of "eminent" citizens, who insist on keeping in the central room a quarrelsome woman, "of good family" (its goodness largely underground), whose obstinate conceit and selfishness make havoc of every good influence therein; defying the master above-stairs and snubbing the poor girl-teacher below, till life is hardly worth living within range of her discordant rule. I remember another school, in the Southland, where one of the gentlest of gentlemen and bravest of captains, at the close of the war, gathered about him a crowd of wild little colored children in a deserted house and "kept school" so beautifully that, out of their own poverty, the colored people developed his dilapidated shanty into a neat and commodious school-house, where, with the help of the older children, he was giving instruction, in his faded old soldier-clothes, such as I never knew until my school days had gone by. *A good teacher carries his school in himself.* His own life and daily "walk and conversation" are an hourly "object-lesson" in morals and manners; his fullness of knowledge supplies the lack of text books; his fertile brain and child-like spirit blossom anew every day into some wise method of imparting truth or awakening faculty; and his cunning hand brings forth devices for illustration more effective than cabinets of costly apparatus. The best teachers tell us they can now manufacture all the illustrative machinery needed in a first-class high school out of the débris that litters an ordinary attic, at a cost not exceeding two dollars and fifty

cents. The librarian of the Department of State, at Washington, will show a set of manuscript school-books, made by George Washington when he graduated, at thirteen, from his three years old-time Virginia school life,—on the whole, superior to any in use in the State of Virginia to-day. Nothing goes well with a poor teacher, whoever he may be; and all goes well when the true master or mistress of souls swings open the humblest school-house door.

One of the most valuable uses of a superior teacher, especially among an uncultivated and poverty-stricken people, is the impetus given to every human faculty in the pupils, and the waking-up that comes among the entire population. I know a hundred neighborhoods where a good, womanly, Christian colored girl has gone from her academical course at Fisk or Hampton, and so toiled with the children and prevailed with their parents that she has not only gotten over her head a good school-house, but built up around her a "new departure" in a Christian civilization. If you have only money enough to procure the best teacher that can be had, take the teacher, gather the children, and begin to push for the millennial. If there is no fit interior, begin in God's school-house of all-out-doors. Somebody will give your new school elbow-room under a tree, and the wondrous library of nature will spread its open leaves before you. Let the teacher instruct the boys to fence in a campus, and the girls to plant flowers therein, and make ready the place for building. Ere long the most godless or stupid of parents will take a big holiday to build you as good a house as they are able, and that humble temple of science may be so adorned by the genius and grace that you can coax out of thirty children and youth, that it will become an invitation to better things. One book is enough in a school, if the teacher knows what to do with a book, while the Congressional Library is not enough for a pedant or a "professor," who only turns the crank of a memory machine. In such a school may be laid the granite foundations of a solid character; and thereon may be raised the strong timbers of a thoughtful and truthful mind, eager for knowledge, never getting enough; and over all may tower the roof of manly and womanly refinement, and with so little money! For the soul of a true teacher, enriched by the loving confidence of a crowd of devoted children, is a mine of gold and silver and precious stones, out of which may be drawn infinite riches for all the generations of men.

The central point in the new public school-life of the South is the training of teachers into ample knowledge and professional skill in handling the best methods of instruction, organization, and discipline.

What we call the "New Education," as you can see it in more than one of your own school-rooms, and find it (not over-much of it, I confess) all over the country, bears the same relation to the old muscular discipline, helter-skelter organization, and mechanical memorizing of books, that the "Limited Express" train that took me in at New York, at 9 A. M., on a Friday, carried me, like a prince of the blood, a thousand miles, and delivered me in Louisville, Ky., "on the second," at 12.30, Saturday, P. M., bears to the stage-coach that trundled from Nashville and Lexington, in my boyhood, with Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay for passengers,—miring at every mile, losing wheels, breaking the harness, killing the "leader," perhaps indulging in a general overturn, till its way-worn crowd was dropped into the muddy streets of the Washington before the flood. A great teacher finds out such methods by experience; but a good training-school gathers up the finer methods of all good teachers, and strives to awaken the spirit that alone can walk in the better way.

Every large graded public school should have a master or mistress fit to train a teacher's class in the upper grade. Every academy or college, without a chair of pedagogy and a live expert in that chair, is like a dish without a handle, or a cart without a horse. Every Southern State is able to establish one genuine normal school for each race, where the best methods can be illustrated, and graduates sent forth to important points. The modern institute, in the hands of skilled teachers, is a normal school on wheels, that may be drawn all over a State, and wake up new life in its drowsiest corner. And, for a generation yet, our Southern States will have the finest possible material for the teachers of its elementary schools in the multitudes of young white women of its better families, with those who are coming up from its poorer classes of whites; while the flower of the young colored people, an army fifteen thousand strong, is now being trained in a score of admirable schools for the good work. Too few, by far, of the foremost young men of the South will be persuaded to serve for the scanty pay of the schoolmaster, while the opening life of industrial enterprise combines with professional and public employment to lure them away. But since 1865 a whole generation of as bright and fine-spirited young women as are found in any land have grown up, thousands of whom are earnestly looking for some honorable means of livelihood, and other thousands are asking how they can do their part in the mighty upbuilding of the new South. There are your teachers,—the best for the children,—fit for any post of authority or administration, if you will only give them a fair chance at the table of knowledge, and aid them to prepare themselves

to teach. Herein is an arena more splendid than the old-time "field of the cloth of gold," where a nobler than old-time chivalry may step forth, in the rivalry of good offices, to crown these earnest, devoted maidens and matrons with a finer wreath than adorned the "queen of love and beauty," even the garland that encircles the brow of the gracious mistress whom the little children adore as beauty, love, and light incarnate in one bewitching form. I do not see how any rich man in the South can sleep o' nights until he has given to a group of these good girls the means of thus serving the State. The young man of culture and position who does not "go in" to help the girls in this, their time of need, has denied the good old Southern faith in woman, and is "worse than an infidel." The poorest mountain hamlet in Eastern Kentucky can raise the money, by some device, to send the best young woman of their region to Berea, that she may come back and teach the children how to excel themselves. So wonderfully has God provided the way for the uplifting of the lowliest through these vast areas, by bringing upon the finest class in the State, its promising young women, the necessity for exertion, and showing them the open door of the school-house where woman in the coming generation can do more for 18,000,000 of people than any body of women or men was ever given the opportunity to do before.

NATURAL METHODS OF INSTRUCTION AND ORGANIZATION.

The fourth essential in "Building for the Children" is *the proper organization, grading, and method of instruction in every department of school education*. After the people have been aroused and money has been appropriated and competent teachers secured, we find ourselves on the threshold of a new difficulty, more troublesome than any other, because more widely diffused, illusive, and slow to be overcome. That difficulty is the chronic delusion of an ignorant class concerning the very nature of education, and its perpetual interference in baffling every wise plan for the solid teaching and substantial discipline of children and youth. An ignorant man inevitably regards education as a sort of magic, and a school-book as a sort of charm; the bigger the subject and the more learned the text-book, the mightier the power of incantation. Thus, when the prepared teacher stands before the children of such a constituency, she is confronted with a sharp demand for impossible results, and is expected to accomplish something beyond the power of gods or men. Too often this illusion is not confined to the illiterate. Thousands of earnest young men and women are studying their brains into a tangle and breaking down soul and body in a wrestling-match with an ab-

surd curriculum that would bother Agassiz himself, and can have no other result than hopeless confusion of mind and life-long disgust at schools and teachers in the student. I am aware what multitudes of ambitious spirits, parents, "professors," and children must be "humiliated" by this application of God's everlasting law that runs through the universe, and should be written over every school-house door; *begin at the beginning, work from the known to the unknown,—take no step in the dark.* The first condition of success in school-work is to obey the law of the great Teacher: "Whosoever humbleth not himself and becometh as a little child, the same shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Of course, I teach no such nonsense as that the child, in the elementary school, shall be made a "thorough scholar," according to the test of the scientist. Science is not for "babes and sucklings." Rather does the true science of elementary education for children, below the age of fourteen, consist, first, in awakening the desire for knowledge; second, training the body, senses, and the faculty of observation to read the open book of nature; third, directing the youthful mind inward to a reverent study of human nature and self-examination; fourth, showing the right way to use books and illustrations of knowledge; all the time working at the foundations of character that underlie all training of the mind, with constant regard to the "gentle manners" that are the finest flower of wisdom and goodness. All this can be done by a skilled teacher with a very narrow course of study, embracing the few essentials of all mental growth. To read and write and use the mother-tongue in simple, effective communication, with voice and pen; to know numbers, not alone as "figures," but in their relations to common things, for the great uses of common life; to hold a picture of the world we live in and its relations to the little patch of it which we inhabit, and the infinite spaces in which it is only a floating speck of dust; to understand, at least, American history, with a rim of the chronicles of the rest of mankind; if possible, music enough to sing out the twang of the rod, and drawing enough, at odd moments, to untie the hand of the child; all the time with little lessons in nature-knowledge and the fit care of the body, and "line upon line and precept upon precept" of true and good and beautiful behavior;—here is a program that can be worked in a log school-house as effectively as in your State university by any competent teacher; *provided parents are willing their children should be children, and school authorities insist on keeping things down to "hard-pan."* For this beautiful way of teaching is so delightful to the children that, once in it, the old order is reversed,

and they must be whipped to be kept away from school ; and the wisest man who looks on would give all his honors to sit once more at the feet of that gracious school-mistress as a little child.

I know just what I am saying. I fully understand that this is, by far, the most difficult problem in the new school-life of the South. New England is still far behind it ; the energetic West is only in the outer courts of the temple ; but in every State I find a few schools that so beautifully illustrate it that I am sure the thing is possible,—as all good things are possible, if men and women will only consent to unload themselves of pride, conceit, hypocrisy, and shams, and work honestly together in the love of God and man. But, easy or difficult, it matters not. Here is the everlasting law for the fit training of childhood and youth ; and in God's law of human growth there is no "North and no South," no respect of persons, bond or free, white or black, great or small ; but all must begin at the beginning, work from the known to the unknown, and take no step in the dark. Unless this can be achieved, or some fair approach made thereto, our education of all grades will turn to dust and ashes in our hands, and a generation trained in shams will find its way to the solemn realities of American life only through new eras of buncomb, bankruptcy, and blood.

THE SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

Here will be found the practical solution of the vexed question of the secondary and higher education, over which too many of our anxious school-men are talking themselves into a heat just now. Until this basis of all education is laid in the sensible and honest elementary instruction of the masses, there can be no higher education except for the favored few, and the secondary instruction will be a pompous "delusion and a snare." I am now talking, not of the high culture that may be found in the wilds of Siberia or the heart of Mexico ; the exceptional appearance of genius and talent that everywhere looks out for itself ; but of that education of the Southern people which every true American desires,—except an occasional member of Congress, for whom there seems too much reading, writing, and arithmetic abroad already. And, I repeat, that only after the work of a full generation, down in the deep places, among the common people, will our Southern States come to know the treasures that lie buried in both the races that inhabit their soil,—like the beautiful new gem, *Hidinite*, first drawn out from the mysterious mountain-sides of the Carolinas.

Ten years ago the parishioners of Phillips Brooks, in Boston

planned a magnificent church, worthy the fame and manliness of the great preacher. The money was raised, and Richardson, the Louisiana boy, now prince of Boston architects, was set to draw the plan. There came forth from his studio a noble pile, crowned by a massive tower that should overlook the city, and float the song of chimes over among the Middlesex Fells, with sweet welcome to the sailor far out at sea. But, alas! this goodly temple must be reared on piles, driven into the shaky ground of New Boston's aristocratic Back Bay. Before the foundations were half laid the disgusting piles began to "wabble" down. And, finally, the great architect was compelled to "raze" his plan, and leave out the lofty magnificence on which his heart was set. So the church is there, a wonder of ecclesiastical architecture, with the stump of the great tower shingled with tiles, waiting for the under-world of the Back Bay to "materialize" to solid ground. Even so do I find the noblest advocates of the higher education all up and down our Southland. No lack of bright boys and ambitious girls in every class or in either race. No special deficiency in excellent professors and university men; indeed, Harvard and Oxford and every wealthy Northern university find the new South excellent recruiting ground for their most important chairs. But when the average pupil comes up to the academy, the expert must too often face the problem that never yet was solved: how, with one hand, to reconstruct a false elementary education, and, with the other, build up the secondary and higher culture which the student desires.

At present, outside a score or two of cities in a region as large as Europe, all that can be reasonably demanded of the Southern people is to keep up their State university, their agricultural and normal instruction for both races, and develop the summer institute into a permanent institution. It is practicable, in towns or cities of one thousand people, to organize a class of the superior students of both races, especially for training in the art of teaching; and this is important in towns where there is no good academy for boys and girls. But the true way, as I see it, in every considerable county town which already has an established academical school for boys or girls, is that these institutions should be reorganized for the proper work of secondary education in the true modern sense; divested of humbug, puff and cram; as liberally endowed as home or outside generosity will warrant; filled with thorough teachers, and adjusted to take from the public graded school for white children all who really need superior schooling. Tuition can be made sufficiently reasonable, with occasional neighborly aid, to educate every promising child. Into

these schools will be drawn an increasing crowd of pupils from the country, and, in ten years, every really good academy will be more prosperous and useful than ever before; for every little country school-house will be a feeder, and the town graded school will make it possible for the academy to do solid and fruitful academical work and prepare the pupils for the college,—which is now too often swamped in its academical grade, almost despairing of a real university life. This organization will serve the white people of the South for fifty years with an admirable system of education.

The same work is already being done for the colored folk in the excellent institutions planted in every Southern State by Northern benevolence, in several States subsidized by the Legislature, already one of the most powerful factors in the elevation of the freedmen. These great schools are growing in the estimation of all thoughtful Southern men, and will become the final universities for the upper strata of the seven millions of the colored race. Of course, all this will come a good deal sooner if the teachers, patrons, and friends of the academies and colleges can be made to see that the people's common, elementary school is neither "godless," nor shiftless, nor a humbug in any way, when made the reality it now is in hundreds of Southern towns and in many a favored spot in the open country. They will see that the people's common school is the best friend of the secondary and higher education, without which these will flounder on through constant failure, and come up cheerfully to its support.

THE FREE LIBRARY.

Every country school-house, every graded school, should *lay the foundation of a free library*, in a collection of good books and periodicals, for the children and youth of the neighborhood. Fifty volumes contributed by the reading families of a country school; a dozen good children's papers, passed in from village homes; a donation of good reading to the academy; a modern endowment for the college library, is practicable everywhere. It will be of small use to teach the four millions of our Southern children and youth to read, if they are turned over to the mercies of the dime novel, the Devil's Weekly, and the diabolical side of the daily press. Every steamboat that lands on a Southern river port discharges a swarm of rats to plague the people, and many a railroad that penetrates your mountain recesses, or bridges your bayous, disgorges the more mischievous pest of vile reading,—the vilest nuisance of metropolitan life. Now the only sure defence against a bad book or newspaper is to teach our children to prefer a good book, and to stop the paper until it is clean.

And this training of a general taste for good reading cannot begin too soon, and is just as important as any other function of school life. The free library and superior journalism are the literary university of the mass of the American people; the complement of good preaching, lecturing, and public speaking of all sorts; a most vital part of that grandest of all human educational agencies, the University of American Life. Our wealthy Southern men at home, and those who go to manœuvre their millions in Wall street, should be called upon to lay the foundations of good libraries where they can best be laid in connection with the school. And I would say to the Northern philanthropist: Plant a generous library of good books in every growing Southern community.

INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION.

I have but a brief space to give to the great theme of industrial education, now looming above our horizon, concerning which, just now, there is more flying of chaff with less outcome of wheat than on any threshing-floor in America.

My conclusion on industrial education in the South runs about in this way. To-day, as I read the statistics of Southern Industry, I see that somebody is prodigiously at work in every corner of its broad domain, and think that stern schoolmaster, necessity, can be trusted, for the next generation, to wield a very sharp pitchfork about the waistband of every "lazy" Southern man or woman,—a method a good deal more effective than any schoolmaster's recipe of industrial education. I think laziness is not our natural vice, and have little patience with the people who expect American children to get their own living or American boys and girls to shoulder the burdens that only belong to mature life. But I do see that the great lack, to-day, of the South is that general intelligence in several millions of its laboring class, of both races, which always, in this country, ultimates itself in more profitable, because better, more skillful and varied industries. The radical help for this lack is not what is sometimes called industrial training; but it is the thorough elementary schooling that will wake up the mind and train the faculty of the children of these illiterate and unskilled workers. The testimony of every civilized nation is to the effect that the final outcome of good schooling is a gradual expansion and uplifting of industrial life. The finest tool of all is the human mind, and the man who can take his own mind by the handle and turn it, in school-boy phrase, "every which way," is the leader in every region of industrial no less than spiritual life. Book cramming does not make skilled workers. Sham teach-

ing ultimates in an epidemic of "big head," with no corresponding growth of brain or skill of hand. But the blessed new education,—the natural, divine, God's method of teaching and training the child,—will send forth the Southern boy and girl of a coming generation in a way that will make many a dead prophet of dismay in Northern and Southern graveyards turn in his coffin with supernatural surprise.

TECHNICAL AND ART EDUCATION.

Meanwhile, in every city, the leading class of women can establish schools for the training of servants, and, by discriminating in favor of the best, gradually get the Southern household on firm foundations of skilled labor and domestic science in the kitchen. The State agricultural colleges can do anything the people need, as soon as the people understand that agriculture is as surely a science as chemistry, and that country-life in the South can be made the most attractive, comfortable, wholesome, and truly refined of any land. Our colored universities should, more and more, become schools of skilled labor, and every graduate should go forth to become a missionary of skilled industry, wherever he lives or whatever he does. In every leading city the women's association for the encouragement of art should be pushed with vigor till it becomes a proper school for the female artisan, who will be needed before the present girls have passed the Rubicon of middle life. There are more than a hundred ways, all respectable, by which a girl in Massachusetts can earn an honest living, and thousands of Massachusetts women, including teachers, are said to be earning from 1,000 to 3,000 dollars a year. The South is to grow in wealth and the demand for manufactured articles, for use and ornament, more rapidly every year. Why should not the multitudes of its young women, now longing for something profitable to do, be trained at home for this profitable work? Why should every Western railroad groan under the army of its young men drifting from the older Southern States to the wilderness, while no country in the world gives fairer invitation to every form of useful and beautiful industry, in the region of skilled activity? The colored people of the South have in them remarkable capabilities as operators and workers in ornamental manufactures, and the men who do not or will not see it, seem to me like the farmer who turns his back on the expert who assures him that the hundred acres of his roughest land cover a mine of coal or iron that, fitly worked, will bring him out a millionaire. All this will come with the growing education of the masses. Why not let it come now for these people, and not wait for swarms of foreign-born workers to come in and reap the harvest that belongs to them?

And with this will come all higher culture in music and literature and art; while the beautiful social life that has always been the pride of its upper class will gradually make its way downward and freshen and gladden and sweeten every Southern home.

NATIONAL AID FOR EDUCATION.

Now, when I stand before a committee of Congress or an audience in Massachusetts or Minnesota, and say *the Nation should help the Southern people in this mighty enterprise of building for 4,000,000 children and youth*, I speak in view of all I have said. I remember that, in 1865, Southern education was in the dust, and that, in 1885, its higher education will have been placed on its feet better than ever; the public school established in every State, for both races; in every State improving every year; and that by the twentieth year from 1865, probably nearly 20,000,000 of dollars will be expended by the Southern people, of their own money, on Building for the Children. I ask the nation to help the Southern people *because no people, under similar disadvantages, has done so big a job of helping itself*. I ask it, because it is constitutional and in the direct line of public policy, from the foundation of the Confederacy that preceded the Union. Every American State has received and used national money; the northwestern and southwestern States, millions on millions in land grants for education. Every State has indorsed the policy of national aid to education, over and over, by receiving and using such appropriations. The common school fund of Kentucky was founded on the surplus revenue distributed in 1836 by the General Government, as was the school fund, in part, of several of the States. The only "humiliation" in receiving such aid would come with the improper use of the money; and, after the lessons of two generations, I believe the Southern people know how to apply money for the children. Of course, such aid should only be given for a time to stimulate, and not take the place of, home effort; and should be distributed by each State according to wise legislation in Congress. I believe the people will demand national aid for education as soon as they know what it means.

THE FOUNDATIONS.

In this way, as I see it, can we alone dry up the sources of evil doing in our land. Every State, city and county in this republic has under it an open slough, through which the all-pervading national barbarism, home and foreign, that rolls its foul and festering subterranean tide from Maine to Mexico, disgorges its hideous malaria.

I never lived in any city where that malaria of barbarism would not make "the whole head sick and the whole heart faint," unless every good man and woman and child was summoned to cast in disinfectants, and toil and "pray without ceasing" to keep it down. I find, nowhere, a more devoted, God-fearing, and resolute band of God's minute-men and women standing by this opening into hell than in every State and city of the South in which I have put my foot for the past four years. And I realize that one good way to shut off the fumes of the pit in Boston is to come down "to the help of the Lord against the mighty" in New Orleans. Every brave soul in New England stands more erect with every blast on the bugle-horn of Haygood and Curry.* I know of no way to dry up the sources of every sort of folly and wickedness in our beloved land except God's original method to put a wise, good man in the place of every foolish, wicked man; to put a good mother into every family, a good minister in every church, a good teacher in every school. I believe the American people, North and South, are quietly but effectually getting out of the hands of little "statesmen," with their little patent right contrivances for "saving the country" by a new plank in an old platform, or a new phrase in an old political resolution. The loud conflicts of parties and sects and classes, with all that makes for separation and hatred and disintegration, will still rage in the upper air. But, as the years roll on, the central, solid aristocracy of mind and soul and hand in this great country will find itself, through all disguises, and will "settle down" to the second century's work of building the new Republic on foundations that cannot be moved — while Building for the Children, in every school, in every church, in every home in this, our beloved country, — before all others favored of God, beyond all other nations the hope of good men around the globe.

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